DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 249 569 EA 017 058

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TITLE Parent Participation in Decision-Making as Perceived by Parents, Teachers, Principals, and Board Members. A Summary Report.
PUB DATE Jun 83
NOTE 43p.; Some charts are marginally legible due to small and blurred print.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Citizen Participation; *Community Control; Community Cooperation; Community Surveys; Cooperative Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; National Surveys; *Parent Participation; Parent Role; *Parent School Relationship; *Participative Decision Making; Public Opinion; Public Relations; Questionnaires; *School Community Relationship; School Support
IDENTIFIERS *British Columbia (Nanaimo); Canada; Gallup Poll

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the major findings from a survey on parent participation in decision-making that was distributed to school administrators, trustees, and a random selection of teachers and parents at School District #68 in Nanaimo, British Columbia. The study was designed to explore means of facilitating partnership between parents and schools in the current sociological and technological context. Color-coded questionnaire forms were distributed to parents, teachers, administrators, and trustees, with questions relating to (1) general identifying information, (2) school community relations, (3) instructional services, (4) personnel, and (5) "free response." General findings are reported for each group surveyed, and tables are provided that show statistical profiles of respondents in relation to questionnaire items. Twelve of the questions asked were similar to those on a 1979 Gallup poll, so results of that poll throughout Canada and in British Columbia are compared with these survey results. Twelve implications are derived from the study as a whole, suggesting that parental involvement in schools is favorably regarded but requires careful planning and cooperation by all groups involved. (TE)

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A SUMMARY REPORT

Parent Participation in Decision-Making as Perceived by Parents, Teachers, Principals, and Board Members

J. Ross White
Assistant Director
DND Schools Overseas
Canadian Forces Europe

June, 1983

EA 017 058

Preface

Last November a survey form relating to parent participation in decision-making was distributed to school administrators, trustees, and a random selection of teachers and parents. The responses received have been tabulated and analyzed and provided the basis for an extensive report.

Several individuals expressed an interest in receiving a summary of the survey results. Although this booklet does not contain a detailed explanation, the major findings are reported. For those readers desiring more details, a copy of the complete study is on file with the superintendent and it also includes an extensive chapter entitled "Review of Related Research and Literature".

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to those who completed a questionnaire. This assistance enabled the writer to complete a project which was of personal interest and one which will hopefully be of benefit to parents and educators in this district as they continue to develop initiatives which will contribute to the education of children.

J. Ross White, Ph.D.,

Assistant Superintendent
-- Curriculum Services

June, 1983

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SECTION 1

Introduction

Overview

In the historical development of education in Canada, a close affiliation existed between the parent community and the teacher. Education was a co-operative effort with parents building the school, providing accommodation for the teacher, and acting as stewards of the educational facility and the resources for the future, the children. As educational opportunity became more universal and the government became more involved by means of legislation, new directions for management and control of the schools were established.

Concurrent with increased legislation, centralization occurred. Schools became larger, more pupils attended school for longer periods of time and teachers were better trained. Technological and social trends also placed new demands upon families and parents as a whole. As a consequence, the close association between home and school deteriorated. Control, almost absolute in nature, was assumed by individuals remote from the closely knit community school.

In recent years, citizens have voiced strong objection to centralized and bureaucratic decisions. For many individuals there was an increasing sensitivity to the lack of opportunity which they had in making a direct contribution to those institutions and activities which had a profound influence on their personal lives and the future of their families. As a result, a groundswell of parents sought the opportunity for a greater voice in the education of their children. Parents in

isolated groups lobbied for legislation which would not only recognize their rights as parents but would also provide a mechanism that supported these rights. As a result, legislators and administrators acknowledged these rights and demands. Opportunities were provided to parents which not only enabled them to obtain information about their children but facilitated their participation on advisory or similar committees. These situations, plus others, reflected a changing atmosphere. There was a search to re-establish the co-operative venture which years ago existed between the community and the neighbourhood school.

This study was designed to explore means of accomplishing this partnership in terms of the current sociological and technological environment. Numerous related questions were posed for which the research sought answers to help provide perspective, directions, and guidelines for the challenge of parent participation in school affairs.

Sources of Information

For the research, parents, administrators, teachers, and trustees of the approximately 12,800 elementary and secondary district pupils were involved by means of a random sample. Table 1, which reports the potential audience, the sampling and the relative response, details the scope of the survey.

Survey Instruments

A survey instrument germane to this study was developed. For each of the four groups being queried--parents, administrators, teachers,

Table 1

Distribution and Returns
of Survey Forms

Population	Distributed	Returns No.	Returns %
Parents:			
Elementary:	253	97	38.3
Secondary:	128	45	36.7
Not stated		2	
	381	144	37.8
Teachers:			
Elementary:	153	99	64.7
Secondary:	84	59	70.2
Not stated		4	1.7
	237	162	68.4
Administrators:			
Elementary:	35	32	91.4
Secondary:	18	14	77.8
Not stated		1	-
	53	47	88.7
Trustees:	9	8	88.8
Total	660	361	53.1

trustees--there was a separate colour-coded questionnaire. Teacher forms were printed on white paper, administrators on green, and trustees on pink. The "personal information" section provided an opportunity for school personnel to indicate whether employed at the elementary or secondary level. Parent forms were divided into blue (elementary) and yellow (secondary) questionnaires. The composition of the questionnaire is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Composition of Questionnaire

	Parents	Teachers	Administrators	Trustees
General Information	x	x	x	x
School Community Relations	x	x	x	x
Instructional Services	x	x	x	x
Administration/Management	x	x	x	x
Personnel	x	x	x	x
General Comments	x	x	x	x
Parent Data for Comparative Study	x			

Identifying information was of a generalized nature and provided background of the respondent. Some items of a general nature reported were sex, years of teaching or administrative experience, level of current professional assignment, and involvement as a parent.

The next four parts were parallel ones for all four responding groups and individuals were asked to respond to a total of forty-seven statements. Responses were coded into a translation which associated each individual reply with parent participation on a continuum between "No involvement" to "Delegation". The designations were assigned weighted values as follows: 0 - No response; 1 - No involvement; 2 - Information; 3 - Consultation; 4 - Co-decision; 5 - Delegation.

A fifth part, "Free Response", provided respondents with an opportunity to make some general statements if they wished. Three statements provided some guided direction for those answering this section. A further opportunity for reactions was possible under "Other Comments".

As noted in Table 2, only the parents had a sixth part labelled "Comparative Poll". The information being sought was an attempt to compare the extent to which the local parents reflected the responses of the public to similar questions posed during a 1979 Gallup Poll in Canada. Twelve questions from the original series of nineteen were selected as they were ones most relevant for the study. Parents were asked, in this section, to circle a response which reflected their opinion of the statement.

SECTION II

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Characteristics of Raw Data

Parent Responses

Table 1 revealed somewhat anticipated results, with a larger number of responses from parents of elementary pupils than parents of secondary students. Actual percentages of parents responding were similar: 38.3 per cent of eligible elementary parents and 36.7 per cent of secondary parents. The total response of 37.8 per cent of those surveyed, while not outstanding, was considered sufficiently substantial to warrant acceptability for drawing conclusions.

Table 3 suggests a composite of results from the 144 parents who responded. A predominate number (123) were aware that opportunity existed for them to participate in or to initiate formation of a School Liaison Committee (S.L.C.), and another 109 knew that such a committee existed in the school of their children. A disappointing number of elementary (fourteen) and secondary (twelve) parents and four unresponsive others suggested that 20.9 per cent were unaware of whether a school committee existed.

That awareness and participation were apparently unrelated was made clear by 106 parents who were not involved with school committees and by ten others who did not respond. This lack of active participation was verified in the second part of the question about involvement with school. Only 23.6 per cent indicated regular and active involvement.

TABLE 3
PROFILE OF PARENT RESPONDENTS

	Elementary n = 97	Secondary n = 47	Total n = 144	Total %
Sex:				
Male	20	12	32	22.2
Female	77	33	110	76.4
Not stated	-	2	2	1.4
Aware of opportunity to form a parent committee (S.L.C.):				
Yes	85	38	123	85.4
No	12	8	20	13.9
Not stated	-	1	1	.7
Does your school have an S.L.C.?				
Yes	78	31	109	75.7
No	3	2	5	3.5
Don't know	14	12	26	18.1
Not stated	2	2	4	2.8
Involvement with school:				
a) Participant as S.L.C. member:				
Yes	24	4	28	19.4
No	67	39	106	73.7
Not stated	6	4	10	7.0
b) Volunteer parent:				
Rarely	31	20	51	35.4
Approximately once/month	14	1	15	10.4
Approximately once/week	17	2	19	13.2
Other	27	17	44	30.6
Not stated	8	7	15	10.4

The preceding characteristics of the responding parents need to be correlated with their responses to the items on the survey form. These results are summarized in Table 4. For this summary, details of parent responses are reflected in the comparison between parents and educators.

Table 4

Parents - Composite Summary

	Elementary Parents n = 97		Secondary Parents n = 47		Test of Significance Value
	Mean	s.d	Mean	s.d.	
Community Relations	2.88	1.16	2.81	1.16	0.339
Instructional Services	2.24	0.99	2.32	1.01	0.448
Administration/Management	2.32	1.04	2.46	1.04	0.757
Personnel	1.97	1.04	2.28	1.14	1.574

Significant Difference
$P \leq .05$ 1.96

Teacher Responses

Table 5 provides a profile of the teachers who responded. Although the majority of responses were from elementary teachers who comprised a larger proportion of staff, a greater percentage of secondary teachers responded. Division by sex was remarkably equivalent and interestingly respondents predominately were those with five or more years of teaching experience. The reported use of volunteers was consistent with the responses by parents. As 50.0 per cent of the teachers did not utilize

TABLE 5
PROFILE OF TEACHER RESPONDENTS
n = 162

	Number	%
Assignment:		
Elementary	99	61.1
Secondary	59	36.4
Not stated	4	2.5
Sex:		
Male	75	46.3
Female	82	50.6
Not stated	5	3.1
Total Years of Teaching Experience:		
1 - 4	16	9.8
5 - 8	40	24.7
9 - 16	61	37.7
17+	43	26.5
Not stated	2	1.2
Parent Volunteers in Classroom in 1981-82:		
0	81	50.0
1 - 12	69	41.4
13+	8	4.9
Not stated	6	3.8

parent volunteers in the classroom, this information suggested that teachers consider this their domain of responsibility.

Trustee/Administrator Responses

These two groups, as co-administrators of the school, first were considered separately. However, since trustees generally are the policy-makers and administrators are responsible for policy implementation, the two groups also were reviewed concurrently.

Both groups responded extremely well, with nearly 89 percent of those available forwarding completed questionnaires (refer to Table 1).

Tables 6 and 7 indicate that both trustees and administrators had several years in their respective positions that served to assure that responses had been based upon considerable experience. Since the sample size for trustees was restricted with no opportunity to have a larger and more significant number of responses, no comparisons were made to determine statistically significant differences. Another consideration was that trustees, as policy-makers, are more indirectly involved with parent participation compared to the more active involvement of administrators, teachers, and parents.

An interesting aspect related only to the trustees was involvement as a parent with schools as indicated by Table 6. Although some trustees did not have children in school and all maintained active schedules as elected officials, time was devoted by some to the schools as a School Liaison Committee member and/or as a volunteer.

School Community Relations, Table 8, indicates that trustees supported a high level of parent participation, particularly with

TABLE 6
PROFILE OF TRUSTEE RESPONDENTS
n = 8

Sex:

Male = 4
Female = 4

Total Years as Trustees:

1 - 2 = 2
3 - 4 = 1
5 - 6 = 4
7 - 8 = 0
9+ = 1

Involvement as a Parent with Schools:

a) S.L.C. Member:

Yes = 3
No = 4
No response = 1

b) Volunteer Parent:

Regular basis = 1
Irregular basis = 5
No response: = 2

TABLE 7
PROFILE OF ADMINISTRATOR RESPONDENTS
n = 47

	Number	%
Current Administrative Assignment:		
Elementary	32	68.1
Secondary	14	29.8
Not stated	1	2.1
Sex:		
Male	37	83.0
Female	4	8.5
Not stated	4	8.5
Total Years of Administrative Experience:		
1 - 4	9	19.1
5 - 8	12	25.5
9 - 16	15	31.9
17+	8	17.0
Not stated	3	6.4

TABLE 8
SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS
RESPONSES OF TRUSTEES AND ADMINISTRATORS

	Trustees n = 8		Administrators n = 47	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
1. Determination of parent involvement in extra-curricular student activities.	3.50	0.87	2.53	0.99
2. Selection of extra-curricular pupil activities.	3.13	0.60	2.06	0.86
3. Selection of parent organized fundraising activities.	4.75	0.43	3.89	1.31
4. Selection of pupil organized fundraising activities.	2.38	0.86	2.47	0.87
5. Use of funds raised by parents.	4.38	0.48	3.64	1.26
6. Use of funds raised by students.	2.38	0.86	2.00	0.74
7. Organization of volunteer parent aides.	3.50	0.50	2.57	1.30
8. Determination of duties for volunteer aides.	3.38	0.70	2.26	1.08
9. Organization of lunch supervision.	3.38	1.11	1.68	1.07
10. Organization of lunch programmes.	3.63	0.70	2.09	1.32
11. Organization of study groups for parents.	4.50	0.50	2.94	1.42
12. Determination of public use of school facilities.	3.38	0.48	2.26	1.21
13. Determination of transportation requirements for students.	3.25	0.83	2.34	1.08
14. Determination of public relations activities for the school.	2.88	1.62	2.70	0.90
TOTAL:	3.46	1.06	2.60	1.27

Note: Values
0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

activities which involve parents directly such as fund raising (item 3), use of funds (item 5), and study groups (item 11). Administrators also assigned the highest level of involvement to these same items although to a lesser extent than trustees.

Trustees indicated there should be less parent involvement in student oriented matters (numbers 4 and 6) and public relations in comparison with other items. Administrators displayed more receptivity toward involving parents, albeit at a lower level.

Instructional Services, Table 9, indicates that trustees perceive less parental involvement in these matters than in the previous set of items. Most items were considered "informational" topics with parents simply apprised by the administration. In general, administrators indicated a reticence to involve parents in the area of instructional services. A similar attitude, but to a lesser degree, was reflected in the responses of trustees.

Administration/Management, Table 10, as in the previous instances, reflects a more liberal acceptance of parental involvement on the part of trustees than by administrators. An analysis of responses by the two groups reveals several similarities. A further examination discloses that trustees envisage a more extensive role for parents in relation to budget considerations (numbers 7 and 8) than administrators. Both groups placed a lower emphasis on matters related to assignments for teachers (numbers 5 and 6), which were to operate independent of parent intercession.

TABLE 9
INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES
RESPONSES OF TRUSTEES AND ADMINISTRATORS

	Trustees n = 8		Administrators n = 47	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
1. Introduction of new curriculum content.	2.88	0.60	2.13	0.57
2. Determination of the detailed content of a curriculum.	2.25	0.66	1.70	0.65
3. Determination of the basic outline of a curriculum.	2.50	0.50	1.85	0.62
4. Selection and approval of the texts for a curriculum.	2.13	1.17	1.55	0.54
5. Selection and approval of the instructional material for a curriculum.	1.63	0.99	1.68	0.59
6. Determination of the teaching methods for different subject areas.	1.75	0.66	1.45	0.58
7. Determination of the frequency and method of classroom testing.	1.88	1.17	1.40	0.57
8. Determination of the frequency and types of commercial tests.	2.25	0.97	1.51	0.61
9. Determination of reporting procedures.	2.38	1.22	2.30	0.77
10. Determination of homework requirements.	2.38	1.58	2.00	0.85
11. Determination of school philosophy and goals.	2.63	1.65	2.87	0.73
TOTAL:	2.24	1.14	1.86	0.78

Note: Values
0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

TABLE 10

ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT
RESPONSES OF TRUSTEES AND ADMINISTRATORS

	Trustees n = 8		Administrators n = 47	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
1. Determination of the size and composition of classes.	2.38	0.99	1.70	0.50
2. Determination of promotion policy and placement of pupils.	2.38	1.11	2.11	0.63
3. Determination of school rules and regulations for the general student body.	2.88	0.60	2.34	0.63
4. Determination of arrangements for parents to discuss matters concerning their children's schooling.	3.25	0.66	2.70	0.77
5. Determination of the teaching load for teachers.	1.75	1.30	1.34	0.47
6. Determination of extra-curricular assignments for teachers.	1.63	0.99	1.47	0.50
7. Determination of the budget requirements for the school.	2.50	1.23	1.68	0.72
8. Determination of budget allocations within a school.	2.50	1.00	1.47	0.68
9. Determination of facility needs and building renovations.	2.88	1.05	2.28	0.84
10. Determination of safety needs and safety programmes.	3.50	0.87	2.83	0.66
11. Determination of health services required.	3.50	1.12	2.55	0.79
12. Determination of school boundaries.	2.13	1.17	1.81	1.02
13. Determination of location of specialized classes (e.g. special education, handicapped, French Immersion).	2.38	1.22	2.19	1.08
TOTAL:	2.55	1.17	2.03	0.88

Note: Values
0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

Personnel, Table 11, indicates what appeared to be a common trend of differences between the opinions of trustees and administrators. On none of the items did the mean scores of trustees advocate "consultation" and they seemingly envisioned less parental involvement on matters dealing with personnel needs and selection items (numbers 1, 3). Responses from administrators, however, revealed stronger reticence than trustees about parent participation in the evaluation of personnel (numbers 7, 8).

Comparative Results

Parents and Educators

Tables 12-15, which follow, detail a comparison of parents with a combination of teachers and administrators classified as "educators".

School Community Relations, Table 12, reflects the same pattern as a comparison between parents and teachers. Despite some differences, greater compatibility exists between parents and educators in this area than in any of the others which follow.

Instructional Services, Table 13, does not reflect the same congruous relationship of the preceding section. Differences are reflected throughout the area and the average response for parents exceeded the "information" level, whereas the mean score for the responses of educators was only approaching that level of parent involvement.

Administration/Management, Table 14, reveals that significant differences occurred between parents and educators on a number of items.

TABLE 11

PERSONNEL

RESPONSES OF TRUSTEES AND ADMINISTRATORS

	Trustees n = 8		Administrators n = 47	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
1. Determination of personnel needs for the school.	1.88	1.27	1.85	0.80
2. Determination of criteria for the selection of teaching personnel.	2.13	1.27	1.75	0.79
3. Determination of criteria for the selection of administrators.	2.50	1.12	2.40	0.79
4. Determination of duties for paid teacher aides.	2.13	1.05	1.45	0.65
5. Participation in teacher selection.	1.88	1.05	1.34	0.47
6. Participation in administrator selection.	2.38	1.11	2.04	0.90
7. Participation in evaluation of teachers.	2.50	1.23	1.15	0.41
8. Participation in evaluation of principals.	2.75	1.30	1.34	0.75
9. Participation in evaluation of teacher aides.	2.00	1.00	1.17	0.52
TOTAL:	2.24	1.20	1.61	0.80

Note: Values

0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

TABLE 12

SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS
A COMPARISON OF PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

	Parents n = 144		Educators n = 209		Test of Significance Value	Sig. diff.
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
1. Determination of parent involvement in extra-curricular student activities.	2.85	1.09	2.69	0.94	1.432	
2. Selection of extra-curricular pupil activities.	2.69	0.94	2.26	0.86	4.372	xx
3. Selection of parent organized fundraising activities.	3.72	1.10	3.98	1.11	2.174	x
4. Selection of pupil organized fundraising activities.	2.66	0.91	2.71	0.91	0.507	
5. Disbursement of funds raised by parents.	3.60	1.03	3.67	1.07	0.617	
6. Disbursement of funds raised by students.	2.33	1.04	2.34	0.87	1.800	
7. Organization of volunteer parent aides.	3.06	1.15	2.84	1.12	1.785	
8. Determination of duties for volunteer aides.	2.71	1.18	2.51	0.95	1.691	
9. Organization of lunch supervision.	2.24	1.14	2.16	1.33	0.605	
10. Organization of lunch programme.	2.46	1.18	2.49	1.30	0.225	
11. Organization of study groups for parents.	3.27	1.12	3.40	1.39	0.970	
12. Determination of public use of school facilities.	2.89	1.20	2.76	1.12	1.028	
13. Determination of transportation requirements for students.	2.67	1.06	2.75	0.99	0.716	
14. Determination of public relations activities for the school.	2.67	1.05	2.72	0.83	0.460	
TOTAL:	2.86	1.16	2.80	1.19	0.473	

Note: Values
0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

Significant Difference:
P ≤.05 1.96 *
P ≤.01 2.58 **

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TABLE 13

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES
A COMPARISON OF PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

	Parents n = 144		Educators n = 209		Test of Significance Value	Sig. diff.
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
1. Introduction of new curriculum content.	2.38	0.89	2.14	0.76	4.84	xx
2. Determination of the detailed content of a curriculum.	2.25	0.98	1.75	0.63	5.40	xx
3. Determination of the basic outline of a curriculum.	2.39	1.04	1.90	0.73	4.885	xx
4. Selection and approval of the texts for a curriculum.	2.22	1.00	1.61	0.70	6.329	xx
5. Selection and approval of the instructional material for a curriculum.	2.13	1.03	1.60	0.64	5.488	xx
6. Determination of the teaching methods for different subject areas.	1.95	1.02	1.36	0.56	6.316	xx
7. Determination of the frequency and method of classroom testing.	1.99	0.93	1.45	0.59	6.165	xx
8. Determination of the frequency and types of commercial tests.	2.05	0.95	1.50	0.65	6.041	xx
9. Determination of reporting procedures.	2.32	0.87	2.11	0.79	2.313	x
10. Determination of homework requirements.	2.28	0.92	2.07	0.78	2.240	x
11. Determination of school philosophy and goals.	2.80	1.01	2.49	0.84	3.031	xx
TOTAL:	2.27	1.00	1.82	0.75	4.584	xx

Note: Values
0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

Significant Difference:
P ≤ .05 1.96 *
P ≤ .01 2.58 **

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With the exception of four items, the pattern is consistent with the comparisons reported separately between parents and teachers and between parents and administrators. Congruence occurred with the nine remaining items. In the final analysis, however, a comparison of the total mean scores of parents and educators in the area of administration/management revealed a statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Personnel, Table 15, reveals that a number of statistically significant differences exist between parents and educators, seven of them at the 0.01 level. These differences were not surprising as personnel matters are considered frequently as personal and confidential. In general, parents reflected an "information" level of involvement whereas educators responded below that level, in some instances considerably.

Parents/Educators - Composite Summary, Table 16, reveals that both parents and educators responded conservatively to parent participation in the decision-making process. Very seldom did the mean score of either group on individual items reach the level of "consultation" or beyond. In many instances, parents had mean scores for the various items which simply reflected a basic desire for "information". This analysis suggested to the writer that many parents were interested in a more active and extended form of involvement than was currently available. Educators, on the other hand, generally contemplated parent participation at a much lower level, the exception being "school community relations". A summary of the comparisons between parents and

TABLE 14

ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT
A COMPARISON OF PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

	Parents n = 144		Educators n = 209		Test of Significance Value	Sig. diff.
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
1. Determination of the size and composition of classes.	2.29	0.98	1.82	0.69	4.968	xx
2. Determination of promotion policy and placement of pupils.	2.29	0.93	2.01	0.77	2.978	xx
3. Determination of school rules and regulations for the general student body.	2.42	0.93	2.18	0.79	2.331	x
4. Determination of arrangements for parents to discuss matters concerning their children's schooling.	2.84	0.95	2.75	0.74	0.955	
5. Determination of the teaching load for teachers.	1.80	1.05	1.40	0.59	4.143	xx
6. Determination of extra-curricular assignments for teachers.	1.78	1.02	1.38	0.55	4.295	xx
7. Determination of the budget requirements for the school.	2.24	1.12	1.80	0.86	3.975	xx
8. Determination of budget allocations within a school.	2.20	1.00	1.39	0.80	6.098	xx
9. Determination of facility needs and building renovations.	2.33	0.99	2.21	0.88	1.170	
10. Determination of safety needs and safety programmes.	2.92	0.86	2.80	0.80	1.325	
11. Determination of health services required.	2.71	0.96	2.55	0.82	1.631	
12. Determination of school boundaries.	2.28	1.00	2.09	0.99	1.762	
13. Determination of location of specialized classes (e.g. special education, handicapped, French Immersion).	2.62	1.03	2.38	0.97	2.203	x
TOTAL:	2.36	1.04	2.07	0.92	2.697	xx

Note: Values
0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

Significant Difference:
P ± .05 1.96 *
P ± .01 2.58 **

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TABLE 15

PERSONNEL
A COMPARISON OF PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

	Parents n = 144		Educators n = 209		Test of Significance Value	Sig. diff.
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.		
1. Determination of personnel needs for the school.	2.09	1.01	1.85	0.88	2.311	x
2. Determination of criteria for the selection of teaching personnel.	2.05	1.05	1.65	0.83	3.822	xx
3. Determination of criteria for the selection of administrators.	2.22	1.16	2.05	0.98	1.440	
4. Determination of duties for paid teacher aides.	2.04	1.08	1.58	0.80	4.354	xx
5. Participation in teacher selection.	1.89	1.04	1.38	0.65	5.224	xx
6. Participation in administrator selection.	2.07	1.07	1.77	0.93	2.739	xx
7. Participation in evaluation of teachers.	2.13	1.14	1.24	0.57	9.819	xx
8. Participation in evaluation of principals.	2.13	1.21	1.40	0.80	6.938	xx
9. Participation in evaluation of teacher aides.	2.00	1.07	1.23	0.57	7.898	xx
TOTAL:	1.96	1.04	1.57	0.76	3.848	xx

Note: Values
0 = No Response
1 = No Involvement
2 = Information
3 = Consultation
4 = Co-decision
5 = Delegation

Significant Difference:
P ≤.05 1.96 *
P ≤.01 2.58 **

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Table 16
Parents and Educators
Composite Summary, Tables 12-15

	Parents n = 144		Educators n = 209		Test of Significance Value	Sig. Diff.
	Mean	s.d	Mean	s.d.		
Community Relations	2.86	1.16	2.80	1.19	0.473	
Instructional Services	2.27	1.00	1.82	0.75	4.584	xx
Administration/Management	2.36	1.04	2.07	0.92	2.697	xx
Personnel	1.96	1.04	1.57	0.76	3.848	xx

Significant difference $P \leq 0.05$ 1.96 *
$P \leq 0.01$ 2.58 **

educators, Table 16, supports the above analysis and indicates the relatively low mean scores for each of the domains.

Supplementary Information

Responses to Open-Ended Questions

A summary of responses by teachers, administrators, and trustees to the four open-ended questions is provided in Table 17. The analysis was a subjective one and comments, when possible, were classified as positive, negative or neutral. On occasion a response to one question was applicable to other questions or reflected responses to other questions. A clear-cut differentiation between questions, therefore, became difficult.

For purposes of interpretation, some examples and their classification follow: A typical positive statement provided by an administrator in response to question two was: "Participation in the decision-making process makes implementing changes much easier. Positive relations foster positive outcomes." An example of a negative reaction was included in "Other comments": "Am not convinced that full participation will be in the best interests of the efficient functioning of the school as managed by the professionals". A "neutral" designation was assigned to low level participation and activities of a fund-raising or volunteer nature.

Although Table 17 indicates a positive tone to parent participation, the responses in many instances reflected a conservative level of involvement with specified controls by means of guidelines. Many educators stipulated that final decisions must remain the prerogative of the school principal and staff. A heavy reliance on parent involvement in activities of a supportive nature was also evident.

Although some reticence about parent participation was apparent, as noted above, the tone of the responses indicated a general receptiveness to a parental presence in the school. This presence could conceivably reduce barriers and create an understanding of some of the benefits to be derived from parent participation in school matters. In summary, a "closed door" tone was not apparent although the "welcome mat" was not always in place.

TABLE 17
RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
BY TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, TRUSTEES

	Teachers: n = 162 Number of Responses			Administrators: n = 47 Number of Responses			Trustees: n = 8 Number of Responses		
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Question One: What opportunity should be provided for parent involvement in the decision-making process?	50	3	12	19		5	4	1	1
Question Two: What do you consider the most important contributions of parent involvement in the decision-making process?	43	7	10	23	1	1	6	-	1
Question Three: Suggestions for the development of parent participation in the decision-making process.	35	2	2	11	2	6	5	-	-
Question Four: Other comments.	8	8	5	1	2	6	3	-	-

Comparison of 1979 Gallup Poll and Parent Respondents

Parents were asked twelve questions similar to those posed in the Canadian Omnibus Gallup Survey of April, 1979. These questions are stated in abbreviated form in Tables 18-20.

The Gallup Poll questions selected were reported upon by the Canadian Education Association. The publication indicated significant differences existed between certain of the highest responses. These significant differences were calculated from a sampling allowance chart constructed by the Gallup organization. The chart was not applied to the School District 68 sample. In question one, for example, the fact that 36.1 per cent judged involvement had improved was considered to be significant, whereas the 31.9 per cent who saw improvement in question two did not comprise a significantly different opinion.

Observations: As indicated in the explanatory note above, a significant number of the Canadian sample, in response to the first question, expressed the opinion that parent involvement in school activities had improved. Although the British Columbia sample did not indicate any significant differences between the top two percentages, the opinion expressed was that the situation had improved. The School District 68 sample followed a similar pattern; however a much higher percentage noted that parent involvement had improved.

A parallel trend was not evident in responses to questions two and three. These questions investigated attitudes about teacher competence and the effectiveness of school management. In both instances more people in the Canadian sample responded "improved" whereas the British

TABLE 18

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON EDUCATION IN 1979 CANADIAN GALLUP POLL COMPARED WITH PARENT RESPONSES IN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 68 (NANAIMO) QUESTIONS 1 - 5

Question	Group Sample	Improved %	Not Changed %	Worsened %	Don't Know Not Stated %
1. Comparing schools of today, to schools in your day, would you say that involvement of parents in school activities has:	Canada Total	36.1	23.6	23.2	17.2
	B.C.	30.1	27.5	25.2	17.2
	S.D. #68	54.2	19.4	17.4	9.0
2. Comparing schools of today, to schools in your day, would you say that competence of teachers has:	Canada Total	31.9	29.1	21.9	17.1
	B.C.	26.7	32.5	27.3	13.5
	S.D. #68	30.6	31.9	24.3	13.2
3. Comparing schools of today, to schools in your day, would you say that school management has:	Canada Total	27.4	24.8	25.5	22.2
	B.C.	23.4	22.4	37.4	16.8
	S.D. #68	25.7	19.4	32.6	22.2
4. Comparing schools of today, to schools in your day, would you say that school curriculum has:	Canada Total	43.2	13.6	24.8	18.3
	B.C.	39.9	16.9	31.2	12.0
	S.D. #68	39.7	5.6	23.6	11.1
5. Comparing schools of today, to schools in your day, would you say public involvement in school board affairs has:	Canada Total	31.8	25.5	17.3	15.5
	B.C.	25.2	26.6	21.9	26.3
	S.D. #68	41.0	21.5	15.3	22.2

NOTE: ____ = Underlining denotes significant percentage difference between top two percentages.

Sample: Canada: n = 2033
B.C.: n = 200
School District 68: n = 144

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TABLE 19

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON EDUCATION IN 1979 CANADIAN GALLUP POLL COMPARED WITH PARENT RESPONSES IN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 68 (NANAIMO)
QUESTIONS 6 - 9

Question	Group Sample					
6. On average, are you satisfied with the amount of information you get about your child's or children's progress in school?		Yes %	No %	Not Stated %		
	Canada Total	77.7	21.4	0.9		
	B.C.	77.2	21.1	1.7		
	S.D. #68	78.3	18.8	2.7		
7. Which of these statements best describes your attendance at home and school or parent-teacher meetings?		Always or Frequently %	Seldom or Never %	Does Not Apply %		
	Canada Total	58.3	36.9	4.3		
	B.C.	48.3	46.7	3.6		
	S.D. #68	66.6	27.1	6.3		
8. How much confidence would you say you have in the local school board in terms of their ability to deal with school issues?		A great deal %	A fair amount %	Very Little %	None %	Don't Know/ Not Stated %
	Canada Total	10.3	53.7	17.1	1.6	17.1
	B.C.	9.1	47.3	19.0	3.5	21.2
	S.D. #68	9.0	61.1	20.0	0.7	9.0
9. Does the school board in your area keep parents and other interested citizens adequately informed of its activities?		Yes %	No %	No Opinion %	Not Stated %	
	Canada Total	44.6	32.1	22.8	0.5	
	B.C.	37.3	39.7	21.9	1.1	
	S.D. #68	39.6	43.1	14.6	2.8	

NOTE: ____ = Underlining denotes significant percentage difference between top two percentages.
Sample: Canada: n = 2033
B.C.: n = 200
School District 68: n = 144

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TABLE 20

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON EDUCATION IN 1979 CANADIAN GALLUP POLL COMPARED WITH PARENT RESPONSES IN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 68 (NANAIMO)
QUESTIONS 10 - 12

Question	Group Sample				
		Very likely %	Probably Not %	Serve at Present %	Don't Know/ Not Stated %
10. At this point in time, how likely is it that you would be prepared to serve as a member on an advisory committee?	Canada Total	28.0	59.8	0.7	11.5
	B.C.	28.3	63.8	1.0	6.8
	S.D. #68	38.9	36.8	4.9	19.4
		Very likely %	Probably Not %	Serve at Present %	Don't Know/ Not Stated %
11. How likely would you be to serve as a member of a home and school committee in your community?	Canada Total	26.4	63.4	0.8	9.3
	B.C.	25.4	68.8	1.3	4.5
	S.D. #68	31.3	40.3	9.0	19.4
		Too much %	Enough %	Too Little %	Don't Know/ Not Stated %
12. How do you feel about the amount of say the general public has in how the schools are run?	Canada Total	4.8	40.9	49.3	4.8
	B.C.	6.2	44.0	41.9	7.9
	S.D. #68	3.5	37.5	43.8	15.3

NOTE: ____ = Underlining denotes significant percentage difference between top two percentages.

Sample: Canada: n = 2033
B.C.: n = 200
School District 68: n = 144

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Columbia set of responses revealed a more negative attitude. Respondents in the School District 68 sample, although reacting similarly to the British Columbia sample, were less negative. Both samples though, revealed a very harsh attitude towards school management as 37.4 per cent in British Columbia and 32.6 per cent in Nanaimo rated the performance as "worsened".

Discontent seems to be more with personnel than with curriculum. A significant 43.2 per cent of the respondents who answered question four in the Canadian sample indicated that the curriculum had "improved". The same trend was apparent with the British Columbia responses but there was no significant difference between "improved" and "worsened". Reactions by those participating in this study were more positive, as 59.7 per cent indicated "improved".

Public involvement in school board affairs, question five, was rated as "improved" by the Canadian and local samples. More individuals in the British Columbia sample suggested that involvement had "not changed" or "worsened". In the opinion of the researcher, the strong emphasis on "improved" to this question and the first might in part be attributed to initiatives of the district investigated although there were no data to confirm this observation.

Similar strong positive responses by the School District 68 sample are apparent for questions six, seven, and eight (Table 19). Except for the response of the British Columbia sample to question seven, a significant difference occurred between the top two percentages for the original groups surveyed. In all three instances, those sampled for this study emulated a similar trend with a strong positive stance.

Even though respondents indicated confidence in school trustees (question eight), there were mixed reactions about the adequacy of board information to parents and public (question nine). A significant number of the Canadians sampled were satisfied, whereas the other two groups sampled were more divided and were inclined to a negative reaction.

As individuals expressed some criticisms of the educational climate and current processes in response to the questions posed, the challenge emerged whether or not parents were prepared to ameliorate situations. In response to question ten, a significant number of individuals in the Canadian and British Columbia samples signified in the negative. A more positive response was obtained from the School District survey. Question eleven was similar in content but closely related to the individual school. Responses were similar to the previous question, with individuals from the district surveyed conveying a more receptive attitude than the others.

Possibly a deterrent to committee participation was the impression that public contributions are not appreciated. This seeming discrepancy between an unwillingness to participate and too little say was highlighted by responses to question twelve. Although a majority of the British Columbia sample expressed the point-of-view that they had sufficient say in how the schools were run, a significant number of the Canadian sample felt they had too little say. A parallel reaction was noted with the School District 68 sample.

Conclusions about Responses to Gallup Poll Questions: As percentages were determined for the categorical responses to each of the

twelve questions, an evaluation of trends was possible. These trends, summarized in Table 21, indicated whether or not the School District 68 sample followed a similar or different trend in comparison to the two original groups. A relationship also could be identified by stating whether the trend was positive or negative.

The summary table reveals that in only one instance, question ten, was the trend displayed by the School District 68 sample different from both the Canadian and British Columbia results. The district trend was more positive in orientation and the writer was of the opinion that local initiatives had created a greater willingness for members of the public to participate as members of advisory committees. Generally, this question typifies the local responses, which were inclined to be more positive in direction whether the trend was the same or different. Those instances where a more negative response was noted provide the basis for further investigation.

Implications

1. To be successful, involvement of parents in school matters must be based upon a planned effort to solicit their co-operation, within a well publicized and well understood set of official procedures.

2. More parents are interested in active participation on relevant items than is usually realized.

3. Trustees, as policy makers, need to be involved actively in any program of parent participation.

TABLE 21

TRENDS OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS IN 1979 CANADIAN GALLUP POLL AND BY PARENTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 68 (NANAIMO)

	Comparison of Nanaimo School District Sample with All Canadian Sample		Comparison of Nanaimo School District Sample with British Columbia Sample	
	Trend	S.D. 68 Direction	Trend	S.D. 68 Direction
1. Extent of parent involvement in school activities.	Same	More positive	Same	More positive
2. Relative competence of present-day teachers.	Differ	More Negative	Same	Less Negative
3. Relative efficiency of present day school management.	Differ	More Negative	Same	Less Negative
4. Satisfaction with present day curriculum.	Same	More Positive	Same	More Positive
5. Extend of public involvement in school board affairs.	Same	More Positive	Differ	More Postive
6. Satisfaction with information about student progress.	Same	More Positive	Same	More Positive
7. Frequency of attendance at home/school or parent/ teacher meetings.	Same	More Positive	Same	More Positive
8. Confidence in local school board.	Same	More Positive	Same	More Positive
9. Adequacy of board information to parents and public.	Differ	More Negative	Same	Less Negative
10. Willingness to serve on an advisory committee.	Differ	More Positive	Differ	More Positive
11. Willingness to serve on a home school committee.	Same	Less Negative	Same	Less Negative
12. Extent of public influence on school operations.	Same	Negative	Differ	More Negative
SUMMARY:	Same (8) Differ (4)	More pos. 7 Less neg. 1 Neg. 1 More neg. 3	Same (9) Differ (3)	More pos. 7 Less neg. 4 More neg. 1

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4. Secondary parents are as interested as elementary parents in the education of their children.

5. School personnel need to appreciate that contemporary parents frequently are well educated and informed about educational matters.

6. Efforts must be made to reduce the barriers of self-protectionism erected by educators against perceived community intrusion into school affairs.

7. Parents can best be encouraged to participate in school affairs if they are attracted by topics relating directly to their children.

8. Community relations must be a perpetual, on-going activity if advocates for education are to be developed.

9. A current wave of conservatism has sensitized parents to seek more information on curriculum and to hold professional staff more accountable for effective instructional services.

10. Parents have unrecognized concerns that go beyond receipt of routine school reports and announcements, and their advocacy of expensive education must be cultivated for continued support.

11. The public needs reassurance that public school employees are qualified, productive, and committed to the task of educating children.

12. Public relations and effective parent communications are essential to develop public support and encourage parents to become involved in school programs.